HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

SECU • NUMBER 111 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, May 7, 2018

Chair

The Honourable John McKay

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● (1530)

[*English*]

The Chair (Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.)): It's 3:30 p.m. I call this meeting to order.

We're fortunate to have Commissioner Lucki here this afternoon.

We are waiting for Minister Goodale. Minister Goodale frequently appears before this committee. I think he does it because it's a warm and friendly committee. I'm sure he'll come along and more formally and properly introduce you, but meanwhile why don't we start with you, Commissioner—and magically, timing is everything.

As I said, Minister Goodale is so enthusiastic about appearing before this committee that he's going to appear not once, not twice, but three times this week.

Hon. Ralph Goodale (Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness): That may wear out my enthusiasm.

The Chair: That may wear out your enthusiasm, but I know it won't change your opinion about this being a warm and friendly committee, Minister. With that, I'll ask you to introduce Commissioner Lucki, and we'll proceed.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I am very glad to greet all of you today on the traditional territory of the Algonquin people and for the specific purpose of introducing to you and to Parliament Ms. Brenda Lucki, the new and 24th commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The Prime Minister announced Ms. Lucki's selection as commissioner designate back in March, following an extensive and professional search to find a successor to Bob Paulson, who retired last summer. As the baton or, as one might say more appropriately in the Mounties, the guidon is passed to Commissioner Lucki, I want to express Canada's appreciation to former commissioner Paulson for his years of service. I also want to thank Dan Dubeau, former Acting Commissioner, who very professionally took charge of the top leadership role in the force while the search process was completed.

Former New Brunswick Premier and former Canadian ambassador to the United States, the Honourable Frank McKenna, chaired that process. It was high calibre, independent, and non-partisan, generating an impressive list of strong and well-qualified individuals for the government's consideration.

For the record, the McKenna search committee consisted of former acting RCMP Commissioner Beverley Busson; former Deputy Commissioner Marianne Ryan; Lac La Ronge first nation Chief Tammy Cook-Searson; former Winnipeg police Chief Devon Clunis; prominent labour leader Barbara Byers; workplace standards expert and adjudicator Manuelle Oudar; National Security and Intelligence Adviser Daniel Jean; Public Safety Deputy Minister Malcolm Brown; and, Status of Women Deputy Minister Gina Wilson.

They worked diligently and produced a very strong set of recommendations for my consideration and then ultimately a decision by the Prime Minister. I want to thank the committee for their excellent efforts and results.

Commissioner Lucki began her new duties on April 16 as the first female permanent commanding officer of the RCMP. In this role, she will lead one of Canada's oldest, most prestigious, and most important institutions. A recognized Canadian icon, the roots of the RCMP stretch back to the original Dominion Police Force in 1868 and the North-West Mounted Police founded in May 1873.

Brenda Lucki brings with her a wealth of front-line experience and expertise in keeping communities safe and secure, and a long and distinguished career as a proven leader in RCMP divisions all across the country. Her work has also extended to the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia, and in Haiti, where she helped train and select police units for the UN civilian police mission.

Most recently, she has served as commanding officer of Depot Division, the RCMP's training academy in Regina. This is highly relevant, because the recruitment, training, and retention of highly qualified police officers and civilians who reflect the rich diversity of Canada, the best ethical standards, and the most modern skills will be vital for the future of the force.

The new commissioner obviously has a lot on her plate. To be clear about the government's objectives, for the first time in history we have made public the mandate letter given to Commissioner Lucki. It is now available to all Canadians online.

We are looking to the commissioner to reinforce the very best of the RCMP while she also leads the organization through a period of transformational change that will modernize and reform its culture. This will involve fundamental issues related to structure, governance, and human resource policies; a comprehensive response to the recent reviews done by Sheila Fraser and the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission; an ongoing assessment of operational priorities and the allocation of resources; and, the arrival of a brand new collective bargaining system.

One critical priority is a safe and healthy workplace. Promoting gender equity, confronting long-standing issues like harassment and bullying, and responding to PTSI and other mental health issues will all continue to be of urgent importance, and the same must be said for the RCMP's leadership role in advancing reconciliation with indigenous peoples.

The mandate letter touches on all of these priorities and a number of other things too.

● (1535)

The goal is effective policing that succeeds in keeping Canadians safe, while safeguarding their rights and freedoms in a manner befitting a Canadian icon that earns and enjoys the trust, the confidence, and the enthusiastic support of the people they serve. To be clear, the commissioner herself has the control and management of the RCMP and all matters connected to the force. The mandate letter does not in any way impinge on the RCMP's essential independence.

I look forward to a productive and collaborative working relationship with Commissioner Lucki. Her leadership and strategic advice will be critical to the public safety and national security policies and actions of the Government of Canada.

Commissioner, welcome, and congratulations. The floor is yours.

The Chair: Thank you, Minister.

Commissioner Brenda Lucki (Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Thank you.

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and committee members. I was told this was the friendliest committee, so I'm happy to start off here.

I would like to express, first of all, how sorry I was to hear about the sudden loss of your colleague and your friend, MP Gord Brown. On behalf of everyone in the RCMP, I'd like to extend my sincerest condolences.

I have truly been given a gift. It's the opportunity to lead my organization to a bright and new future. With three weeks under my belt as the new commissioner, and armed with a mandate letter outlining those opportunities and expectations for the RCMP, my sleeves are rolled up and I'm ready for the task at hand.

[*Translation*]

I would like to talk to you today about what I see as three central elements of our way forward: people, community and the opportunities and challenges on the road to our 150th anniversary.

[*English*]

An organization is truly the sum of its people. The RCMP of today is made up of almost 30,000 individuals who joined Canada's national police service to make a difference in their communities. Over 18,000 of those are called upon to put themselves in harm's way, and yet another 12,000 work tirelessly behind the scenes to support them and make our front-line operations possible.

Canada is a diverse and evolving society made up of people from many different backgrounds with the same aspiration for peace and prosperity. I want all Canadians to see themselves in the RCMP—a modern RCMP. We are most effective when we are reflective of our community.

[*Translation*]

Diversity in our workforce not only keeps us relevant and in tune with Canadians, it gives us a diversity of skills and experiences that help us to advance and innovate.

[*English*]

As inclusion leads us to broader perspectives, respect must also be front and centre, both respect for each other and respect for each and every group and individual we interact with. By acting honourably, professionally, and compassionately without letting biases or assumptions cloud our judgment, we will in return earn the respect of our colleagues and those we serve.

Respect, of course, leaves no room for harassment. I cannot and I will not accept this kind of behaviour and will do everything in my power to address it. We will get at the root causes of bullying, discrimination, and harassment wherever it exists, and we will continue to build our programs to identify, eliminate, and prevent this corrosive behaviour from undermining the important work that we do.

● (1540)

[*Translation*]

Respect thrives where people are healthy. Over the past several years, we have launched many new programs and services aimed at supporting the health and well-being of our employees.

[*English*]

As part of our mental health strategy, we will continue to roll out readiness training, peer support networks, and employee assistance services that will grow and evolve. We recently introduced a disability management and accommodation program to support our injured members' recovery. It is extremely important that we get our members back to work as valued and productive employees of the RCMP as soon as possible.

Finally, our RCMP requires ethical leadership to support and empower our employees so they can go above and beyond in their work. These important steps forward only happen when every single leader at every level models the attitudes and behaviours we expect of those around us. We will develop these leaders, encourage those who demonstrate what we value, and support them with modern and accountable governance structures.

My second area of focus is the communities we serve from coast to coast to coast. The concerns of rural Canadians have been prominent in recent years. Technology and accessibility bring more issues that were once considered big city problems to our rural areas. Communities that were once insulated from some of these threats are now struggling to cope with the impacts of rising crime rates, potent and dangerous drugs, and the impact of fraud, Internet-based fraud, and exploitation.

We have responded, and will continue to respond, with innovation to better protect our citizens and our employees. Recent examples include new techniques for safely training police dogs to detect fentanyl and other dangerous substances, issuing naloxone to front-line members, and new cybercrime strategies.

We also work day to day with the most vulnerable people in our communities. Our first responders are called upon to deal with complex situations where mental health, poverty, addiction, and domestic violence call for extraordinary judgment and restraint.

[*Translation*]

We will continue to modernize the training our members receive to deal with these often volatile situations, and we look to our partners in the health sector and other areas to build a stronger network to respond to these critical needs.

[*English*]

For many years during my service, I have worked with indigenous communities and know first-hand the value and the importance of reconciliation with our first nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

The RCMP has worked with and among indigenous people for its entire history. We have been partners and helpers; however, we must also acknowledge the role we played in some of the darker periods.

We will continue to work to understand and appreciate the complex and important relationship between indigenous communities and Canadians, and use that understanding to increase the trust in order to serve the needs of all with fairness and respect.

My philosophy is simple: make every community better than what it was when you got there.

Across the country, thousands of our employees do exactly that by responding to calls for help, by solving crimes, by engaging with young people in our hockey rinks and in our schools.

When we get to know the community in which we work and come to understand each other, we can start to build trust. We will continue to be a presence that Canadians can turn to for help with the confidence that we will be fair, transparent, and accountable.

[*Translation*]

To meet the needs and expectations of Canadians, we need to be a modern and agile police service, capable of adapting quickly to an ever-changing policing environment.

[*English*]

As our society changes, Canadians are presented with ever wider career options. Policing is not for everyone, so the challenge of recruiting and training people with the right aptitudes and outlook is a growing one. We must address vacancies and grow our numbers to meet the needs of our communities, and address the pressures on our employees.

These pressures also include a pay and benefits package. I look forward to working on these issues and others with new bargaining agents, who will be active advocates for our members and employees.

In order to tell this story, we must continue to develop business intelligence systems and analytics, so we can clearly demonstrate the impact we are having on the safety of our communities. Using yesterday's technology is just not an option.

Since becoming commissioner just a few short weeks ago, I have gained an even broader perspective on the scope and complexity of our institution. The more I learn, the more I see the potential to build upon our strengths to make positive change, and I see many opportunities to earn the trust and respect of Canadians.

I believe it is important to honour and learn from our past while modernizing for the future. I am really excited for the work ahead with our employees, our partners, our communities, and yourselves as we travel the road together to 150.

Thank you, and I welcome your questions.

● (1545)

The Chair: Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you, Minister.

Mr. Picard, you have seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Picard (Montarville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Commissioner Lucki, congratulations on your appointment, and thank you for accepting the mandate, which may be a gift to you, but it is also a huge gift for us.

For a number of years, you have been, in a sense, a witness—an involved one—to a way of being, living and behaving at the RCMP. You now have the mandate of leading the RCMP, and your first objective addresses the whole issue of fighting harassment.

What have you learned from your years of experience, and on which aspects will you be basing your strategy to achieve the cultural shift we are all hoping for?

Commr Brenda Lucki: First, I must say that it took a lot of courage for all the women who told their stories during the lawsuit filed by Janet Merlo and Linda Gillis Davidson. I know that it is no easy task for those concerned, but it is paramount. It is indeed sad to realize that such experiences need to be heard in order to reveal that harassment exists within the RCMP.

It is important that we learn from these experiences and implement policies to ensure that this never happens again in the RCMP. One incident of harassment is one too many. I think that everyone in the RCMP should assume this responsibility. It's one thing to take responsibility for oneself, but it requires even more courage to take responsibility for someone else. This problem is everyone's responsibility.

[*English*]

Mr. Michel Picard: You will lead what is, from my standpoint, probably one of the best institutions in Canada. It's a traditional institution. Habits have become a way of working, and harassment, from my standpoint, is a bit more, or I should say, is a lot more and what women went through.... It's a tough environment. I will include in the harassment the bullying and questionable behaviour.

I would like to hear from you about.... Allow me to say it this way: how will a lady tell the guys how to behave?

Commr Brenda Lucki: We do it all the time. It's part of our makeup. Ask my husband.

I think actions speak louder than words. We can say all we want about harassment, but we need to demonstrate that behaviour, and it comes from the top. If you permit something, you're promoting it. We have to show that we don't permit those behaviours.

My predecessor, commissioner Paulson, used to say that if he were to walk into this room today and light up a cigarette, there wouldn't be one person in the room who wouldn't say something. We need that exact same response for when somebody does something inappropriate. We can't hide it. We need to face it head-on.

● (1550)

Mr. Michel Picard: In another matter, I had the great pleasure to work with IMET in Montreal for a few years. I see it growing and evolving, and I read recently that they are hiring more professionals from the civil side. Is this mix of professional knowledge and expertise along with traditional police officers particular to IMET, or is it part of the view of the RCMP for the future to have a—I'll use your words—more "modern and agile" police force?

Commr Brenda Lucki: It's not just for IMET. We have to look at every unit that we provide services for to ensure we have the right person doing the right job. If that includes a specialized service, we have to look at the particular skill sets we need and we have to ask ourselves whether that person needs to go through six months of general policing and carry a gun, or if they can come from a different sector.

We use those people in areas such as cybercrime, because police officers are not the best with computers. I'm probably the best example of that one. We need to get the best person we can for the job, so we want to look at civilianization in every type of work we do. Sometimes it will work; sometimes it won't. But definitely, when we look at the front-line policing, we have to make sure they are on mandate as well. We don't want somebody who's a full, gun-carrying member doing something that we could better utilize on the front line.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Michel Picard: The status of the RCMP civilian members has changed, or will change, under the new plan. The addition of external professionals will bring a new dynamic to a team of police officers who are used to doing police work. As of now, police officers themselves will be able to choose a union to represent them. These are three new dynamics.

How do you think people will react to this new agreement on unionization?

What are the main points you would like to focus on, given this new balance of power between a group represented by a union and your position as commissioner?

Commr Brenda Lucki: In my opinion, the group that will represent us will have a specific aptitude, that of knowing our agency. We will have to work in concert with this group, or else the members will lose in the end. We have to sort out many issues with the union. We will have to address one issue at a time. Our members have many concerns, such as compensation, working hours, uniforms and equipment.

In any case, we must maintain good working relations, or else the members will lose in the end.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Picard. I hate to be a hawk about time, but members get after me after a while.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Paul-Hus, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus (Charlesbourg—Haute-Saint-Charles, CPC): Ms. Lucki, congratulations on your appointment.

You are continuing a wonderful career. Looking at your resumé, I realized that you became a member of the RCMP in 1986. That made me reflect a bit. I see that we are currently focusing a lot on the problems the RCMP must face with harassment and bullying. I can't help but draw a parallel with my own experience. I joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 1987. Back then, the soldiers' mentality, way of working and behaviour were similar to those of police officers. Today, 31 years later, I ask myself questions. There were many problems back then, but nobody talked about them. Today, however, everyone is talking about them, which is normal. We cannot accept such behaviour.

Given that you have been on the force for 30 years, I would like to ask you whether, in your recollection, there has really been a change in behaviour, or relations between officers, or whether the situation has stayed the same, yet now we no longer tolerate this behaviour in any way—which is what we're aiming for.

● (1555)

Commr Brenda Lucki: There have certainly been major changes. Our society no longer has the same amount of tolerance. When I became a member of the RCMP, some people would very often drive while drunk. This is no longer tolerated today. I believe it was in 1994 that we became one of the first government agencies to adopt a policy on harassment. I'm not saying that everything was all good back then, but many things have changed, specifically our society's tolerance level. We have therefore changed our ways.

Our members don't come into work every day telling themselves that they will behave as harassers for the day. Nowadays, it's a lot more subtle, to the point where it's invisible. Back then, it was far more obvious, and we didn't have any policies in place to deal with these issues. I'm not saying that it was acceptable, but it was the way things were.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Okay.

Some soldiers believe that their work often has a somewhat macho component to it. Some complained a bit about how they could no longer use language that would satisfy their need to further express their manliness. Clearly, we can no longer tolerate this nowadays.

For the last two years, you headed the RCMP Academy, which trains recruits. Are the young recruits, who plan on becoming RCMP officers, already aware of this new approach upon their arrival?

I imagine that the older officers had quite different experiences, but, in your opinion, what do the young people nowadays believe when they start their training at the RCMP Academy?

Commr Brenda Lucki: I find their way of interacting with each other to be very different. They are more tolerant, more inclusive and more respectful. It's still a difficult job. This kind of work doesn't always bring out the best in people. It's hard to be at our best when we come into the office after a 12-hour shift.

However, we explain that to the new recruits. We emphasize this point a lot in the cadet training program and at Depot Division. We want to make sure we change their way of thinking. We let them know that disrespectful behaviour will in no way be tolerated.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: You were given a mandate letter. I believe this is the first time that a Minister of Public Safety has handed a mandate letter to an RCMP Commissioner.

I would like to know your thoughts on this. In the letter, the minister clearly says that you will keep your independence as a police officer, but, on the other hand, you are, in a way, taking orders from the government.

Is there anything in the mandate letter that makes you uncomfortable?

Commr Brenda Lucki: Not at all.

[*English*]

I'm not saying that because you're sitting next to me.

[*Translation*]

It's really a reflection on our opportunities, and that's exactly what I was expecting. It's also a reflection on the strong support we get from the government, particularly from the Prime Minister and the minister. I believe that this is a roadmap for us, the future and our 150th anniversary.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Great, thank you.

I have time left for one more question, on the problem of the migrants at the border.

The RCMP is deploying a lot of resources in the Saint-Bernard-de-Lacolle sector. Officers on the ground are being asked both to arrest migrants and to help them. How do your officers feel about this? Do you have enough resources to manage this flood of migrants? Clearly, this problem will persist.

● (1600)

Commr Brenda Lucki: Our goal is to place migrants, when they enter Canada, in a secure environment in line with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. I think that we are doing good work on this front. We're using technology and we're working with our partners in the United States. To date, it's been going well.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Are you talking about the technology used when they arrive?

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes.

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Do your officers find that this is a situation that should stop, or are they simply doing the work they are being told to do?

Commr Brenda Lucki: Pardon me?

Mr. Pierre Paul-Hus: Are the officers on the ground there until other decisions are made? This is not a normal situation.

Commr Brenda Lucki: We're talking with the government to ensure that we have enough resources to do the work. If the situation persists, we will have to readjust our plan.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Paul-Hus.

Mr. Dubé, the floor is yours for seven minutes.

Mr. Matthew Dubé (Beloeil—Chambly, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Madam Commissioner, congratulations on your appointment. Like the minister, I am delighted that this is the first time in the history of the RCMP that a woman will occupy this position on a permanent basis.

I have a few questions, some of which have been already touched on.

[*English*]

You've received accolades for this particular issue in the past, so I'm curious to hear more on reconciliation with first nations. A lot of the work police do is based on trust. It's safe to say when we see things like the tragic circumstances around young Colten Boushie and others, some trust has been lost.

Given the RCMP's role in many remote and rural communities in Canada, what work do you see needs to be done to regain that trust, and making sure that you're collaborating in a robust way with first nations communities and indigenous people?

Commr Brenda Lucki: There are many families who have come forward with the murdered and missing indigenous women and girls inquiry to tell their story and that tragedy. That cannot be easy, and it lays the foundation for some work we have ahead of ourselves.

Like many Canadians, I was moved by their testimony. We need to take that, and learn from it. There cannot be one life lost in vain. If we don't learn from that, then shame on us. We need to look at that, and build trust and reconciliation.

It's never too late to do the right thing, so we need to build those relationships. In many of the communities—and we often don't tell that story—we do have very positive relationships. When something does go sideways, often it's fixed in the first instance. Sometimes in our history, we haven't done that, and when we don't, we need to work better at that.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: The point you raise is fair. It's not an institutional issue, but the trust aspect is really important. I appreciate all the sentiments you just expressed. Is there anything more that needs to be done specifically to regain some of that trust that's been lost as we move forward on this particular issue?

Commr Brenda Lucki: I think most things boil down to communication: a lack of communication, not timely communication, inaccurate communication. We need to ensure when something goes sideways or when a tragedy strikes a community, whether it's a personal tragedy or an emergency in the community, a flood or fire, that we're respectful in our communications, and that they're timely. I think that will go a long way to build bridges with our indigenous people.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: I don't want to put you on the spot; I know it's your first time before this committee as commissioner. Would you be open to considering some kind of role that could be filled by someone who can liaise with indigenous people and first nation communities? Obviously, there's the complaints commission and such, but in the event that a particular issue or a specific case comes up, in the spirit of trying to fix things, perhaps that individual could fill that communications side and also maybe look at what went wrong.

Commr Brenda Lucki: We know that does work because we have a liaison officer with the missing and murdered indigenous women inquiry who works tirelessly with the inquiry. Any of their requests go through the liaison, Assistant Commissioner Shirley Cuillierrier, and her team.

● (1605)

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Would that be appropriate to consider on a larger scale?

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes and no. I think we do have great communication in the smaller communities. I don't know if that would be redundant, but globally we have an aboriginal first nations advisory group for me as the commissioner. I look forward to tapping into their ideas as well as seeing some of the recommendations from the inquiry.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Thank you very much.

My next question is on police work, which has changed and evolved a lot in recent years. Consider, for example, the need to access cellphone data, access without a warrant, or even the use of technology such as the Stingray cellphone tracking equipment. The debate has already been partly opened, and will continue in the years to come.

What future and what role do you see for the RCMP? What are your needs? How will you contribute to the debate so that you can continue doing your work, while guaranteeing to protect Canadians' privacy and rights?

Commr Brenda Lucki: I do not want to talk specifically about the technology we use, but I know that many people in the RCMP are working to make sure that our technology is up to speed with the devices used by criminals, which isn't always the case. Therefore, we will keep working hard to be sure that our technology is up to date, and that we are ready for the future.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Great, thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: You still have a minute and a bit.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: For my last minute, I would like to ask you about working conditions and unionization. I think we have already broached the topic.

As you know, this is a current issue, and the appropriate legislation has yet to be passed. What is your take on the presence of a union in the RCMP, and how will you work with your members to ensure that their working conditions match the work they have to do.

Commr Brenda Lucki: I believe that the union is good thing for our agency. Often, RCMP members' rights and obligations aren't well defined. There are many grey areas. The union will give us the opportunity to work with our members.

[*English*]

We can speak with members more freely through a union.

[*Translation*]

I think that this is very important. We do not view the union as an adversary. We aren't used to this at the RCMP, because our former system didn't work like that. I've realized that my team wants to work with the union, and not ignore it, to ensure that our members are properly represented.

[*English*]

The Chair: *Merci*, Mr. Dubé.

Mr. Fragiskatos, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos (London North Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you to both of you for being here today. Congratulations again, Commissioner.

I want to ask you about mental health. The mandate letter clearly says that a priority ought to be placed on confronting mental health challenges faced by RCMP members. In your statement you were very clear that the force will continue to roll out mental readiness training, peer support networks, employee assistance services. Disability management is important, as is the accommodation program to support injured members' recovery, all of which is extremely encouraging.

I do want to ask your thoughts on stigma in the first instance because the Auditor General's report of 2017 did say that members are often scared of being ridiculed and isolated if they seek help. With that in mind, I wonder if you could speak to the importance of addressing the stigma around mental health challenges.

Commr Brenda Lucki: I think members have had some great advocates in the RCMP who have come forward, and I think it assists in our way forward to see that members who represent our organization are not afraid to come forward. They're good examples for everybody.

The government will be giving us some great funding over the next five years so that we can roll out our mental health strategy, but if members are suffering in silence, that money is not good for anybody. We need to get the message out. I know that in the divisions I've been in, we have been working with various other campaigns like Bell's Let's Talk.

I believe there's still a stigma, not just in the RCMP, and I think we have a bigger mountain to climb, because it's often looked at as a rough and tough kind of organization. We deal with the mental health issues of everybody else, and God forbid we should have mental health issues ourselves. Given what we do day in, day out, it's a pretty hard go for some members. But I think if we get the right people saying the right things and leadership from the top and we take that stigma away, that will go miles, along with the money we got for our mental health strategy for mental health practitioners and for reaching out to the membership. I know we have programs now so that if a member is involved in a tragic event, we're very quick to have critical incident debriefings so that people know that it's okay to come forward and tell their story.

● (1610)

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Thank you very much.

I have one more question and then I'll turn it over to my colleague Mr. Spengemann. It's about workplace culture and harassment in particular.

You focused on the importance of diversity training. I remember reading a comment shortly after you were chosen for the position, in which you talked about the importance of integrating—as has been the case in training at Depot, for example—diversity training so that young cadets could be exposed to those teachings and the importance of them and so you could make sure that they take those teachings and apply them to their everyday work.

Obviously it doesn't come down to one answer, one solution here, but what does diversity training look like, and what does it entail? There's evidently a suite of approaches one could take to dealing with these issues, but tell me about diversity training and how it's been employed.

Commr Brenda Lucki: At the training academy, there's no one program. We try to integrate it throughout the program in every facet of their training. One program we recently introduced is the Kairos blanket exercise, which I participated in at the training academy. That was phenomenal. I didn't actually think you could teach empathy. My husband said that. Sorry, he's going to kill me.

The Chair: It's on the record.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes, it's on the record—my ex-husband, soon to be.

Mr. Peter Fragiskatos: Politicians could use a lesson.

Commr Brenda Lucki: No, I honestly didn't think you could teach empathy, but that exercise taught me the opposite of that, through having to physically sit and stand on blankets and get the history and get to know what happened and gaining that understanding. It cannot do us wrong. You can't undo that kind of training. It sits with you. I think about it now and I think about how powerful it was. Watching the cadets go through that was really a powerful experience. We plan to roll that out across the nation, of course, but it does take time.

Mr. Sven Spengemann (Mississauga—Lakeshore, Lib.): Thank you very much for the time, Mr. Fragiskatos.

Congratulations, Ms. Lucki. It's great to be with you, and thank you for your service.

I want to ask you about the RCMP's very important international work.

Along with my colleague Mr. Gerretsen, I serve on the Standing Committee on National Defence, and we're actually at this very moment doing a study on UN peacekeeping. You earned peacekeeping medals in 1993 and 1994 from the UN and from Canada in 2000, and you had a distinction from the force commander in 1993. This is difficult work, in Yugoslavia and Haiti. Can you tell us what that work is like, how important it is to use the skill set of building trust and also how we can motivate women and men to not only join the RCMP but also sign up for these challenging international missions that are so crucial to international peace and stability?

Commr Brenda Lucki: We actually have never had issues or problems having people sign up for international missions, but it's about ensuring that we get the right person to do that. From my time on international missions, coming from a democratic society and going into a society that is not so democratic, I know that teaching policing in those non-democratic nations is important. Actually at the time I went overseas, I was the only woman out of all the countries to be operational. Other countries sent women but in administrative roles. I think it's very, very important, when you want to teach democracy and teach policing in a modern society, that you include women, and you must include diversity. When I say diversity, I don't always mean the colour of your skin. I mean diversity of experience, diversity of background, diversity of what you've gone through in the police, and your expertise.

I think we do very well internationally and I think we need to continue doing that.

● (1615)

Mr. Sven Spengemann: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think that's my time.

The Chair: It's just about, but not quite. Thank you, Mr. Spengemann.

Speaking of time, I have 23 minutes' worth of questions to fit into 15 minutes.

I am going to take some prerogatives as the chair, and extend to the end of Mr. Dubé's round so that we'll get the 23 minutes in regardless.

Mr. Motz.

Mr. Glen Motz (Medicine Hat—Cardston—Warner, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Congratulations, Commissioner.

The last time we spoke, briefly, was at the investiture at the Governor General's ceremony in 2013 for the Order of Merit of the Police Forces. We were in the same group. I do recall us shaking hands, and you escorting your husband out of the room so the group of us could be part of that.

Congratulations. I guess we've both kind of jumped from the fire into the frying pan, so to speak. Good for you. I look forward to your leadership in this organization.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Thank you.

Mr. Glen Motz: I have a couple of questions.

Where I come from in southern Alberta, and throughout Alberta and Saskatchewan, rural crime has escalated beyond those communities' capacity to handle it in some circumstances. I appreciate that your resources have been redeployed and depleted to deal with other competing interests across the country—national security, illegal border crossings, etc.

Keeping that in mind, I know from speaking with quite a number of detachment commanders that they have points of frustration, and that their communities are expressing points of frustration, with the limited number of resources that they have to actually respond to rural crime.

I'm just curious to know your plans on, specifically, how to deal with that.

Commr Brenda Lucki: That is a difficult question.

I see a co-responsibility in the sense that, from the RCMP perspective, we have to ensure that we have the right numbers at each detachment, and we have to start looking at other ways of doing business because there's a lot of time spent that's not on the road.

We have to look at creative ways of increasing the visibility in that community while still ensuring that we have the accountability on the paperwork side with regard to all the various reports that we have to do. Look at how complex things are. I look at an impaired driving investigation in 1994 and an impaired driving investigation today. It's apples and rocks. It's not even in the same fruit family.

It's very complicated and very long, and as things have evolved, I think the numbers haven't evolved. The other thing that I see when I say it's "co-responsibility"—and I'm not at all putting the responsibility on the residents—is that when we deal with rural crime, often things are moving into rural areas and we don't even see it coming. The people in the community still have the mentality of not locking their doors or not locking their vehicles.

I know, myself, because I was a victim in Grande Prairie. I was devastated. My nephew's car was broken into. It was a crime of opportunity because he didn't lock his car. He thought that since he was in rural Alberta, he didn't need to lock his car. He lost everything inside his car. I was really mad and felt vulnerable, so I can only imagine what the people in the communities feel. However, I think we have to work together. There are rural crime watches that work very well in certain communities, so I think that approach of working together might help, as well as looking at numbers to make sure we have adequate resources in those places.

Mr. Glen Motz: Thank you.

In your response to Mr. Picard's question, you said that we need "to ensure we have the right person doing the right job".

In response to that, I'm kind of curious about your philosophy on recruitment, on equality, and on quotas. Do you believe that recruitment quotas and targets are important to encourage diversity in the force? Is that still going to make sure that we have the brightest and the best? What's your approach, moving forward, to ensure that we keep a balance?

● (1620)

Commr Brenda Lucki: We can't reduce our standards in the RCMP, absolutely not. We have a certain type of person, a quality of applicant, that we take. I'm sure that the minister will agree, having been to the RCMP training academy often. If you watch the troops marching around the parade square, they're very diverse. There are a lot of different makes and models of Mounties out there, and if for some reason we aren't getting the diversity, then we need to actually, if we have to, look at quotas. We need to reflect the society that we are policing and be a reflection of that community.

However, I'm very proud to say, having just left Depot, that there is quite a bit of diversity, especially diversity of experience. During my time, we had a 54-year-old brain surgeon, a neurosurgeon, graduate from the RCMP training academy. That's just one example. We've had people from all walks of life, so that diversity is there and so are the visible minorities.

Obviously, we want more women. Recently, we had the first two applicants who have gone through the RCMP wearing the hijab during their training in the academy. I think we're doing well, but we can always do better.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Motz. I think I've heard that phrase somewhere.

Ms. Dabrusin, you have five minutes, please.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin (Toronto—Danforth, Lib.): Thank you.

It's good to have you here, Commissioner. I want to welcome you to our committee and congratulate you.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Thank you.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: It's good to see you. I saw you on the front page of the newspaper the first thing in the morning, and now I get to see you in person.

The reason I raise it is that I was looking at *The Globe and Mail* and there was a series in that paper by Robyn Doolittle which touched on sexual assault cases that were found to be unfounded. I know the last federal budget included some funding for the RCMP to look into those cases.

I am wondering if you could tell me about your plans, not only on the the looking backwards review with those cases, but the going forward training and improvements that can be done when looking at these types of sexual assault complaints.

Commr Brenda Lucki: I just happen to have somebody behind me who intimately knows that, who is leading up the review team. That would be Commissioner Brosseau.

Maybe he would like to comment.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: He comes with his nameplate too. That's wonderful.

Deputy Commissioner Kevin Brosseau (Deputy Commissioner, Contract and Aboriginal Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): She told me not to wear it on my head.

Voices: Oh, oh!

D/Commr Kevin Brosseau: Good afternoon, and thank you for that question.

Mr. Chair, the series of reports on unfounded cases by Ms. Doolittle was very impactful for our organization, as with many policing organizations around the country.

In advance of that report being released, we started the review. With regard to the retrospective review of historical cases, as you mentioned, it was to see what went wrong, what happened. We reviewed thousands of cases to determine where the gaps were. Was it a training issue? Was it a supervision issue? What was it that was going on?

In fact, we found that it was elements of each. We've produced a report, which I'm happy to make available to the committee, that identifies the pathway forward: enhanced training, including trauma-informed training for our employees, and making that available for all members, no matter where they are, and making it relatively easy for them to access it. Given the geography of our organization, sometimes that's difficult to do. As well, there is the oversight, making sure there's proper governance and oversight across the board, and supervisors, etc., to ensure that if a sexual assault complaint comes in, how that in fact will be handled.

The other part I thought was interesting was the third party reporting and partnering with sexual assault victim advocates or centres, to give victims of sexual assault another opportunity to report. They're not ready, but they can come to the police when in fact they're ready. There's still that opportunity to have someone hear what happened to them.

We know that sexual assaults are under-reported, dramatically under-reported around the country. We were looking for ways to ensure—and it goes back to the commissioner's points around increasing and enhancing trust; it's the trust issue—that when a victim of sexual assault comes to the police, they'll be treated seriously, taken seriously, and their investigation will be handled appropriately and thoroughly.

● (1625)

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

You mentioned about having people who have experience working with people who are survivors of that kind of violence. I was looking at one of the articles that referred to a Philadelphia model. The RCMP was listed as one of 15 services that are considering having reviews going forward with advocates who work in that field.

I am wondering if that was what you were referring to there.

D/Commr Kevin Brosseau: Thank you for the reminder. Shame on me for forgetting that.

Absolutely, the broad outside external review, or oversight role, that the Philadelphia model entails is exactly another portion of our way forward. We can become navel-gazers and too introspective in terms of how we handle it. Let's rely on those with specific expertise about the things we may not even consider are important to have that second look—sober second thought, if you will—around how these are handled and a way forward—a broad stroke on policy, training, and/or who handles these cases in the first place.

Ms. Julie Dabrusin: Thank you.

The Chair: Now we move to Mr. Carrie. Welcome to the committee.

Mr. Colin Carrie (Oshawa, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank the commissioner for being here.

I liked in your opening remarks that you said you were looking forward to the major opportunities and challenges going forward.

I want to talk about probably one of your first challenges moving forward, the legalization of marijuana. I came from the health committee. Looking after the health and safety Canadians I think is on top of everybody's mind.

I think Canadians would like to know whether your organization is fully ready for the legalization of marijuana as far as public safety and road safety are concerned. We know the drug recognition expert program isn't where it needs to be. The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Addiction recommends that Canada have about 2,000 DREs, and I don't think we're even close to that.

As the premier policing organization in Canada—I know you've had funds from the federal government, unlike some of our local police departments that haven't had that funding to move forward—are you ready?

Commr Brenda Lucki: We will be ready, absolutely. We are doing drug recognition expert training as we speak. We had our first Canadian course in Vancouver, I believe, two weeks ago. That was a major coup for us. Normally it's down in the States, and we brought it to Canada. I can't say exactly how many courses we have planned....

Kevin, how many courses do we have planned?

D/Commr Kevin Brosseau: About 10.

Commr Brenda Lucki: We have about 10 planned for the next fiscal year. Right now we have almost 200 drug recognition experts in the RCMP, but the numbers obviously are larger when we include all the different police forces.

The other aspect for the marijuana is that we have the DRE side, but we also have to train our members on the legislation itself so that when the legislation goes through, our members will be ready to know what to do with the legislation as far as operationalizing it is concerned.

Mr. Colin Carrie: One of the challenges, too, is the science behind determining impairment. What is the scientific standard you'll be using for determining impairment?

Commr Brenda Lucki: I have no idea. Sorry.

Mr. Colin Carrie: It's okay. We heard about blood samples to determine if.... You can have a DRE do the sobriety test, and that will tell you so much. I believe there's some testing—

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes. There's saliva testing—

Mr. Colin Carrie: —perhaps saliva testing and stuff, but it may require blood testing.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes.

Mr. Colin Carrie: It's not very far away. To hear you say that you have no idea, I'm a little bit concerned about that.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Well, specifically, I don't, but I know that there is both saliva and blood testing. I know that in Europe they have roadside....

Actually, we had the commissioner from Australia at the training academy, and they have all kinds of testing that they're doing, but there's legislation that goes with every single bit of testing.

Mr. Colin Carrie: To hold up in Canadian courts as well, to my understanding, for the blood testing in Canada you have to do it under the supervision of a medical professional.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Yes.

Mr. Colin Carrie: Normally this would be done at a hospital. Have any funds been given to ramp up the capacity in hospitals? A physician does not have to provide that service. If we're looking at precedents in court, if we're getting this happening in a couple of months, it would be really bad case law if things weren't in place. Do you know if funds have been given to hospitals to ramp up that capacity?

Commr Brenda Lucki: I can't speak to hospitals specifically. What I can say is that in drinking and driving, we often take blood samples, and we do that at the hospital very successfully.

● (1630)

Mr. Colin Carrie: Yes, but there may be a requirement to increase that capacity—

Commr Brenda Lucki: To increase the number.

Mr. Colin Carrie: —and I was just wondering about that.

The minister is here. Maybe he could inform us. I note that in the budget there was, I believe, $167 million for DREs. Now, assuming that's $20,000 per officer—I know the Arizona costs—that's only 83 officers more than we have now. My number is that 665 Canadian officers are trained. We need 2,000. That's the DRE side of it, but what about for the blood testing?

Hon. Ralph Goodale: Mr. Carrie, the Department of Public Safety has been working with their departmental counterparts across the country to allocate the funding we've set aside for the implementation of both C-45 and C-46, and that is $270 million and some spread over a number of years. That is to make the new technology available, to accomplish the training that is necessary for the new technology, and to implement—

Mr. Colin Carrie: Will the professionals be trained on the ground by July 1?

Hon. Ralph Goodale: The schedule has started now, as Commissioner Lucki has already mentioned, but it's spread over a period of, I believe, two years to get from where we used to be for both the DREs and the standard field sobriety testing, the officers who are trained in both of those capacities, to get—

Mr. Colin Carrie: But the drawing of blood is a medical—

The Chair: Mr. Carrie, unfortunately, we've run out of time.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: I'm very anxious to pursue this issue, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I know you're very anxious to pursue this, and I'm sure you'll be given quite a number of other opportunities to pursue it.

Hon. Ralph Goodale: I would just make the point, in one sentence, that there is a schedule for implementation that has been very carefully negotiated with the provinces, and the federal government funding is in place to make it happen in a way that will support the implementation of both C-45 and C-46.

The Chair: I think that's what you call an extended run-on sentence.

Madam Damoff, you have five minutes, please.

Ms. Pam Damoff (Oakville North—Burlington, Lib.): Thank you, Chair. I didn't think I'd get time.

I apologize for being late, Commissioner. I want to first welcome you to the committee. I was in the House for the debate on Bill C-65, which is on harassment and violence in the workplace, something that I know, and I'm confident, you will be dealing with in the RCMP.

My colleague Ms. Dabrusin was asking about sexual assault cases and the unfounded cases. One of the other things we've heard quite a bit about, especially at the status of women committee, is indigenous women in corrections and their experience through the justice system, as well as bringing the level of training for RCMP officers.... It's similar to what you're doing with sexual assault cases, but ensuring that all of the officers have training on the history of colonialism, for example, and residential schools, so that when they are dealing with indigenous women who come into the justice system they have some comprehension of the history that these women have probably gone through.

I'm wondering if you could share with us your plans around training, in particular for the officers dealing with indigenous women in the communities.

Commr Brenda Lucki: Again, part of that training is through the Kairos blanket exercise, which covers the historic perspective. We also have a cultural awareness online course that every member must take. The provinces have a two-week course for cultural awareness specifically of indigenous people. I took mine in Manitoba. It was a very comprehensive course, where we actually had a sweat and we got the opportunity to interact with survivors of the residential schools. It's very comprehensive in that way and is supplemented by the online course.

I think we have good coverage of it. In the training academy, we've included a module on missing and murdered women. Specifically, the victim in that case, in consultation with indigenous people, has been made to be indigenous, so that they understand some of the ramifications of the differences and how to interact with the community in those instances.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I'm sorry. You said someone who is indigenous is doing that?

Commr Brenda Lucki: No. The victim in the scenario is indigenous. I'm sorry.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay. That's great.

What impact do you think Bill C-65 will have on what you're doing in the RCMP?

Commr Brenda Lucki: I can't specifically say; I have to be honest.

● (1635)

Ms. Pam Damoff: That's fine.

Commr Brenda Lucki: I don't have the intimate knowledge of Bill C-65, but I know that we're taking a lot of steps and looking at our processes internally with respect to harassment and violence in the workplace. We have to make sure that victims feel free to come forward. Often, the victims who are in the organization don't feel that our process is transparent. We're looking at different ways that we can deal with that—maybe outsourcing—but we're just in the preliminary stages of looking at various ways in which we can ensure that a victim feels they can trust the process we have. Because we can do whatever we want, but if they don't trust it, it's not going to....

Ms. Pam Damoff: Ms. Dabrusin was talking earlier about the Philadelphia model. That's something I know the Halton police are moving towards for Halton. They're actually calling it the Halton model, because they're modifying it slightly, but it's certainly one that lends itself well to working with organizations that have the expertise in the community.

Often we hear that women aren't prepared, that survivors aren't prepared—it's predominantly women—to come forward to the police right away. They need that support in the middle to give them the comfort and the confidence to be able to report to the police. I'm really pleased that it's something you're looking at with the RCMP.

Commr Brenda Lucki: We are in the midst of...or we have already rolled out, I think, the third party reporting in Manitoba.

Ms. Pam Damoff: Okay.

Commr Brenda Lucki: The victims, with the advocates for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, have that opportunity to report through on third party....

Ms. Pam Damoff: How much time do I have left?

The Chair: You have 28 seconds.

Ms. Pam Damoff: I just would like to welcome you and thank you. I look forward to working with you in your new position.

Commr Brenda Lucki: As do I. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Damoff.

Mr. Dubé, please, for the final three minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Matthew Dubé: I appreciate that you are here today. I know that you are new to this position. Forgive me if my questions are a little difficult.

I would like to return to the issue of access without a warrant, and to cellphone tracking equipment. I know you said that you couldn't comment on this. However, there is currently a case involving 35 or 36 alleged associates of Montreal's mafia. Essentially, the Crown has abandoned the case due to tactics used by the RCMP.

I only have three minutes left, and I know that this is a complex issue, but can we at least have a commitment that these kinds of tactics or procedures will be reviewed? At the end of the day, it isn't only the rights of Canadians that are at stake here. A case like this one can also imperil investigations and, consequently, public safety.

Commr Brenda Lucki: I will ask my colleague Mr. Michaud to answer your question, since he is an expert in this field.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: Of course.

Deputy Commissioner Gilles Michaud (Deputy Commissioner, Federal Policing, Royal Canadian Mounted Police): Good afternoon, everyone.

Thank you for your question.

You're referring to project CLEMENZA. More specifically, it's important to be careful with conclusions that are drawn without having all the facts concerning the decisions that were made by the Crown. In some circumstances, there was indeed an aspect related to the technology that was used, but this technology was used in compliance with judicial authorizations that were obtained.

In this case, the issue was about our ability to divulge the technology and certain details related to it, something that we were not in the position to do. It is therefore important to be careful not to draw certain conclusions.

Mr. Matthew Dubé: This is unfortunately an issue that will require a bit more discussion than my speaking time can offer. I still want to flag this issue, because it will be an extremely important one to follow during your mandate. That is my humble opinion.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Dubé.

On behalf of the committee I want to thank you, Commissioner and Minister Goodale, for coming before us. I hope this was a fruitful and good working exercise between the commissioner and the committee. My wife too will be surprised to learn that empathy can be taught.

We look forward to seeing Minister Goodale tomorrow morning.

With that, we are going to adjourn.

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